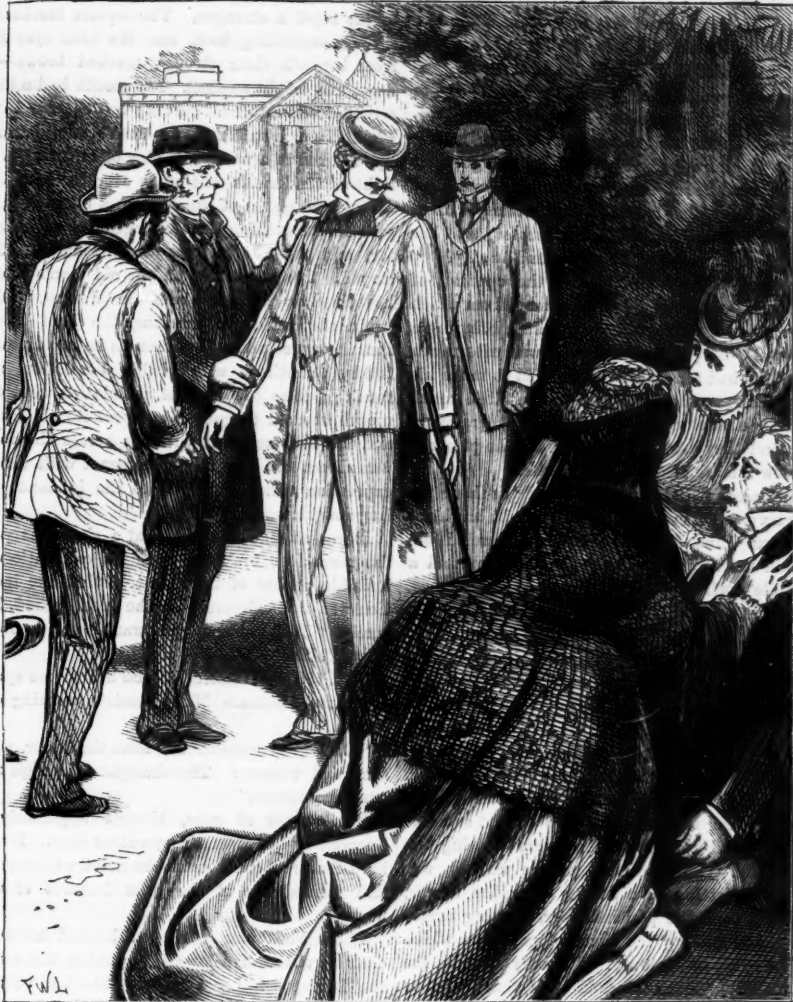


THE GIVVER

Saturday, October 7, 1871.



(Drawn by F. WILFRID LAWSON.)

"Then, sir, . . . you are my prisoner"—p. 5.

HIS BY RIGHT.

BY ALTON CLYDE, AUTHOR OF "UNDER FOOT," "JOHN HESKETH'S CHARGE," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.—LEWIS DARLET'S HOUSEHOLD.

IT was situated in the oldest quarter of the old city, where the shadow of the great cathedral brooded solemnly, and the quiet was seldom broken by any sound except the echoing chimes—a long, low house, quainter than any of the quaint dwellings in its neighbourhood. It had heavily-framed windows that seemed to grudge admittance to the light, and a low-arched doorway ornamented with grotesque

faces. It was a grave, sombre place, even in that grave region; shut in from the street by an unsociable barricade of wall, and a crumbling, blackened archway, with an inhospitable-looking gate that was always kept closed, and at which beggars rarely stopped to ask alms. In that house, for more than a quarter of a century, had lived Lewis Darley. Little was known of him, and that little unsatisfactory, for he had always shown himself decidedly unfriendly to his neighbours. They credited him with the possession of great wealth, and the report had gone among them that he was a miser. Their knowledge went no further, except that he was a bachelor, and kept no servants, only the hard-featured, elderly housekeeper (who was as churlish as her master), and her daughter, a strong active girl of one-and-twenty.

About sixteen years previous to the opening of this history, Lewis Darley took a journey, from which he returned, on a stormy winter evening, bringing a three-year-old baby-girl, whom, it was afterwards whispered, he had adopted, and intended to make his heiress. This strange incident had excited much neighbourly curiosity at the time, but it gradually died out, and they became accustomed to the presence of that new inmate of the miser's home.

The cathedral bell had just chimed the hour for morning service. Everything was looking its brightest in the warm June sunshine; even the weird old house, and the room in which its master passed a considerable portion of his life—a bare, blank place, whose furniture was limited to an old-fashioned writing-table, an oaken settle, and two heavy stolid-looking chairs, evidently survivors of an extinct species. The rest of the large room had been left a waste of empty space, only broken by a grim iron safe that stood back in a recess, and a bookcase, crowded with old newspapers and musty volumes, that looked as if they had not been read for years. It was comfortless and uninviting at all times; but that morning it seemed to have caught some of the warmth and brightness that were blessing the world outside. The casement of the window was thrown back, letting in a shower of golden beams, that rippled over the polished floor, slanting across the table, and gilding the sheet of paper on which Lewis Darley's pen was busy. The only thing in the room that could claim kindred with that gracious radiance was a freshly-filled glass of flowers standing at the writer's elbow. Incongruous as they looked with that figure and its surroundings, there was something about them that told of woman's love, and gave to that desolate-looking place a strange brightness that seemed to be appreciated, for the writer laid down his pen once or twice and took up the flowers, inhaling their perfume, and laughing softly to himself.

"She thinks they make the room pleasant; and they do. Well, they cost nothing, and *she* brings them. I like them for that."

The figure bending over the table was that of a little thin old man, with a profusion of white hair that gave the head something of a patriarchal look. The face on which the glancing sunbeams fell did not belong to the ordinary type. At first sight it might repel a stranger. The square forehead had a hard unyielding look, and the blue eyes flashed from beneath their strongly-marked brows—cold, keen, and bright as steel. The mouth had a habit of setting itself into hard curves; but there were times when this expression gave place to another, and the lips relaxed in a wonderful play of softness—a latent light of tenderness that broke over the face, like an unexpected gleam of sunshine on a bit of rough grey granite—something that changed its entire character, and made a perfect transformation while it stayed. That look was on the old man's face when he talked to himself about the flowers. He was again absorbed in his labour, the bent forefinger running up columns of figures as he rapidly cast the totals, sometimes with visible exultation in the result; but as the work of calculation went on, his mouth seemed to gather back all its old hardness, and the deep seam of wrinkles across the forehead was shown out in stronger contrast with that other expression which belonged to the influence of the fragrant blossoms.

It was at this moment that a short sharp rap at the room-door broke in upon his calculations. An irritable pucker of the face told that the interruption was not welcome. As the door opened, he said curtly, "Well, what do you want? you know I am busy, Phillis."

"I'll tell you, master, if you'll hear me speak. I come now because Miss Bessie's working in the garden."

"Can't you come in and shut that door, you tire-some old woman? The draught is enough to give one rheumatism."

She obeyed at once, though apparently uninfluenced by her master's querulous tone. It was the hard-featured old woman who acted as housekeeper, and formed one of the grim features of the old house.

Phillis Ford was privileged beyond most of her class by virtue of a long life spent in the service of the Darleys—father and son. She had only left it once, on the occasion of her marriage; but being left a widow at the end of three years, she had returned, bringing her child, which she was permitted to keep with her. Thus it was that her daughter Phoebe had grown up, and become in her turn a servant of the family. The old housekeeper's appearance was somewhat singular. A woman of muscular form, tall and upright for her years; her dress followed the fashion favoured by old women of a past century; and her cap, with its close crimped border, was the ugliest specimen that had been achieved since caps became an institution. She

stood composedly before her master, who surveyed her over the rims of his spectacles.

"Now, Philis, if you have anything to say, let it be in few words, for I am going out at twelve; and if I am to be interrupted, I shall never get this work done."

The housekeeper's manner was as blunt as his own.

"It is about Miss Bessie that I want to talk."

"About Bessie?"

"Yes, sir; that is why I came while she is out there." And she pointed through the open casement to where a young girl was weeding a flower-bed. Between the house-door and the gate intervened a square enclosure or courtyard, containing an ancient sundial and a broken stone basin, that might have been once designed for a fountain; but now it was full of many-hued flowers, and was called Miss Bessie's garden. That pleasant innovation belonged to the fresh young life which pervaded the house with the presence of the fair girl, who had grown up there like a coy solitary violet, buried among crumbling ruins. It was that stooping figure and flushed down-bent face that made the picture to which the open casement served as a frame. When she stood up, in a momentary cessation of her labour, and pushed back the curls from her face, one small gloved hand holding the garden-rake, the tall slight figure showed off all its supple grace. The old man's gaze lingered fondly on her, until the servant said, "I have a favour to ask, sir."

The keen eyes of the old man were hastily transferred to her face, with an uneasy look, and the hard lines, which had relaxed as he gazed upon the fair figure outside, crept back, as he asked, "For your daughter, Phoebe?"

"No; if my daughter wants favours, she must beg them for herself. It is for Miss Bessie."

"Why cannot Bessie ask it herself?"

"Because she knows nothing about it; but I've noticed lately that she's getting pale and thin."

A shade crossed the old man's face, and there was apprehension in his tone as he said, "Pale—thin; why, Philis, she seems quite well."

"Seems well enough at present, sir, but she won't be if she stays so much indoors; she ought to have more change and enjoyment."

"Dear me, I never thought of that. I am glad you mentioned this, Philis; and you think she is getting pale and thin, and I never to notice it! I must get her to take walks."

The old woman made some minute pleats in the hem of her apron as she said, "I think she would like to go to the grand flower-show, if—"

"If what?" asked the old man, testily, as the servant hesitated.

"If she had things fit to go in; I mean if she could be dressed like other young ladies."

"Her dresses are very good ones, Philis."

"They are dreadfully shabby, sir; that's why she never goes outside the gate."

"Bessie never made any complaints to me."

"Not she, sir; if you wait for that, you'll never spend a shilling on her."

The old man's brows lowered, and he shuffled nervously among his papers. For some seconds the master and servant looked at each other with an odd kind of hostility. Her words had provoked a renewal of the warfare which was often going on between the two strongest points of his nature—love for his adopted daughter, and the passion for hoarding wealth.

Philis Ford was not in the least discomposed. The scene was nothing new to her; there were always the same difficulties to be fought with, in any question with her master that involved the outlay of money; but the old servant took all as a matter of course, and quietly waited for her master to speak.

"Philis!"

"Well, sir."

"Don't you think Bessie might manage with what she has for a short time longer?"

"She can, if you want her to stay indoors and see her die," was the answer she flung at him with great indignation.

She had a certain quality of rough native courage, and a habit of fearless outspokenness, of which her master stood in awe.

The old man ran his hand through his hair, saying plaintively, "Dear me—dear me, what strong language you do use, Philis."

The servant ignored his remark, and asked bluntly, "Is she to go to the show, sir?"

"Think of the expense, Philis."

"I do, master, and tell you to your face that I'm ashamed of you; to think of grudging a few pounds for her clothes. She's too good for you. Do you remember the night you brought her home, sir; how you said if God spared her to grow up, you would make a lady of her, and *save no expense*?"

"The money you say I grudge I am saving for her, Mrs. Ford; every farthing of it is for her and my nephew, Gerald Darley."

"But it will be no use, sir, if she pines away her life before that time comes; let her enjoy a little of it now while she can. Suppose she was to die, sir, you would be sorry you had not helped to make her life happier."

"Well, well, Philis, there is reason in what you say; and now I think of it they sent tickets from Chadburn Court, that will save something. You may tell her, Philis, that I am going to take her to the flower-show, and arrange between you about her new things."

The old servant then left, well satisfied with the result of her interview, and as an odd contradiction, after her extravagant suggestions respecting the flower-show, she went back to the kitchen prepared

for a vigilant supervision of the small economies, which were very small indeed in Lewis Darley's household.

CHAPTER II.

CHADBURN COURT.

CHADBURN COURT, the family seat of Sir Richard Chadburn, had formerly represented one of the finest estates in that part of the country, but it had become impoverished before the accession of the present baronet. Several of his ancestors had lived high and spent freely, the result was that the estate had passed into the hands of Sir Richard, shorn of its fairest portion, for much of its land had been sold from time to time under pressure of pecuniary difficulties, but enough remained to sustain the family credit and enable the Chadburns to retain the position which they had always held among the neighbouring gentry.

The house, a substantial massive-looking structure, was built upon rising ground in the midst of a finely-wooded park, where nothing was wanting to satisfy the most exacting taste.

The sunshine was lying rich and warm upon the winding walks and undulating slopes of velvet sward, making gem-like sparkles in the broad silver sheet of water, where the stately swans sailed in what seemed the perfection of graceful motion.

At the entrance to one of the broad walks, and under the shadow of a magnificent clump of elms, whose interwoven branches made a verdant arch overhead, a family group was gathered on the same June morning that Lewis Darley received the visit from his housekeeper. Seated on a garden-chair, with hands lightly resting on the top of his gold-mounted walking-stick, was a stout elderly gentleman of benevolent aspect, with quick restless eyes that seemed constantly on the alert. There was now and then a touch of irritability in his speech and manner, but it was kept under check by native good humour and strong power of self-control—that was Sir Richard Chadburn, just recovering from a protracted attack of his old enemy, the gout.

He was engaged in a lively talk with his wife and daughter, who occupied seats near him. Lady Chadburn was a handsome dignified-looking matron of aristocratic presence and a high-bred manner which had been voted perfection in its style. She was credited with many excellent qualities, but she was not so popular as her husband, perhaps because she was less affable, though perfectly polite to all. Her polished manner had a reserved coldness to inferiors, which effectually cut off familiar advances, and distinctly marked the dividing line beyond which they would not be suffered to pass; but in her own sphere the mistress of Chadburn Court was held to be exemplary in the several relations of wife, mother, and friend.

Beside Lady Chadburn sat her only daughter, a blonde beauty, who had just passed her twentieth birthday, but looked two or three years younger. There was something unaffectedly sweet and childlike about the fair face, in the play of the sensitive lips, and the shy look of the soft fawn-like eyes over which the white lids drooped so prettily. Lucy Chadburn was an admired belle, but her brother Cyril always complained that she wanted more character, and had not enough of the pride and spirit which he liked to see in a woman.

She had her hands full of flowers, which she was skilfully blending into a bouquet. Her father watched the process with pleased interest. Those small white hands were just fitted to give the fair fragile things the dainty handling which they needed.

He smiled as he said, "You are busy this morning, Lucy."

"Yes, papa."

"And who is to benefit by your diligence—I mean, what are you going to do with that?" pointing to the nosegay in her hand.

"It is for Harold's room, papa."

"Why, does he care for flowers?"

"Oh yes, he is very fond of them."

"Indeed, I should scarcely have thought it. You are an obliging little sister. I suppose you adorn Cyril's room in the same way?"

"No, papa, he does not like to see them in his garden. He says the proper place for flowers is the garden or conservatory, and that he is quite satisfied to admire them there."

"Ah! that sounds like Cyril," commented Sir Richard. "What a difference there is between those two lads!" he added, addressing his wife; "I confess I don't quite understand either of them."

"A difference that will always exist, I am afraid," sighed Lady Chadburn. "Harold will never be like his brother, I have given up hoping for that."

"Perhaps not," said the baronet. "It is well that Cyril is the eldest, the family honour will be safe in his hands. Harold may sober down as he gets older, and he's not a bad-hearted lad."

Lucy's hands paused for a moment in their task of arranging the flowers, and with a heightening colour, she gave her father a grateful look of involuntary thanks for his last words, and she said, in a low tone, "I am glad to hear you say that of Harold, papa."

"Why, my dear?" asked her father.

Lady Chadburn looked mildly interrogative at her daughter.

There was some confusion in her manner as she answered, "Because Harold does not seem to have many friends. I am fond of both my brothers, for Cyril is very good, but——"

"But what?" queried the father, seeing she hesitated.

"I—I think Cyril's not so kind-hearted and generous as Harold."

These were daring words from Lucy; but there was no opportunity for comment upon them, nor could she tell how they had been received, for at that moment two young men joined them. A few minutes previously they might have been seen talking earnestly, the taller of the two now and then raising his hand, as if to enforce what he was saying.

Lady Chadburn, who had been watching them, murmured to herself, "I suppose Cyril has been trying, as usual, to give his brother advice; but I doubt if it will effect any good."

While the members of the Chadburn family were thus occupied, a cab containing two men drove up the road, and stopped a few yards from the lodge-gate.

"We must get down here, Sims; there's nothing like caution in these cases," remarked the elder of the two, who seemed to take the lead in directing their movements.

"Is yonder the place we want?" asked his companion, pointing in the direction of Chadburn Court.

"Yes, and a fine place it is; but it strikes me, Sims, we shall have some trouble before we've done with this affair."

A few minutes later, and the two men were at the lodge; but the gate being closed, they were unable to carry out their original plan, which was to enter unobserved.

The old keeper eyed them suspiciously as the spokesman asked, "Is this Chadburn Court?"

"Yes."

"Can you tell me whether Mr. Harold Chadburn is at home?"

"Oh, you want Mr. Harold; what is your business about?"

"It is private, and all you've got to do is to answer my question, and tell me whether or not he is at home."

"Yes, I think he is," was the reluctant answer.

The lodge-keeper had strong doubts about the strangers, and the nature of their business with his young master; and being a prudent man, answered the next question by shifting to others the responsibility of showing the men where to find the object of their inquiries.

"Can you tell me where he is to be found, for we have no time to lose?"

"You had best go up to the house."

The two men whispered together as he opened the gate to admit them, then one of them asked, "Which way shall we go?"

"Take that to the left, it will bring you to the side entrance, ring the bell, and ask for Mr. Steen."

And as a precaution against being drawn into further talk, the lodge-keeper turned away abruptly, leaving the strangers to pursue their way. But instead of following his directions they took the centre walk; the quick eyes of one of the men had caught sight of the group under the trees.

"All right, Sims, this way; there they are, governor and all, a family party. Do you see those two young men standing up? Well, one of them will be our man. Quick, let us make the best of the chance now we've got it."

"Well, Harold, what sport have you had this morning?" asked Sir Richard, turning to his younger son.

"Very good, sir."

"Ah, I'm glad to hear it; have you done for today?"

Before an answer could be given, the party received an unexpected addition in the persons of the two strangers. Cyril Chadburn turned in haughty surprise to answer the question addressed to him by one of the men.

"Pardon me, sir; but which of you two gentlemen is Mr. Harold Chadburn?"

"I am," said the younger brother, stepping forward.

"Then, sir," laying his hand respectfully, but firmly on the young man's shoulder, "you are my prisoner."

CHAPTER III.

THE SUMMONS.

ABOUT fifteen miles from the cathedral city where Lewis Darley lived, and six from Chadburn Court, was a busy little town, which had struck out with such energy in the march of progress that it had rapidly risen from an overgrown village to a town of considerable size and importance, as was testified by the whirl of its manufactories, the rumbling of heavily-laden wagons, and the enterprising new streets, which had cut up the surrounding fields, effacing all signs of the peaceful green meadows, where cows had been wont to graze. So the little town had gone on building, draining, and improving, until it rejoiced in the dignity of a corporation and a local board, and had finally crowned its triumphs by achieving the distinction of being represented in Parliament, and having the right to add its voice in the discussion of public questions, both political and social.

Among the professional men who had been attracted to this place as a new field for their exertions, was Dr. Ward, a physician of considerable ability, who had rapidly risen to the foremost rank, and won for himself a prominent position among the leading men of the town. Within the past three years his extended practice had obliged him to take an assistant; he considered himself fortunate in securing the services of Gerald Darley, a young man of great promise, who soon succeeded in making himself invaluable to the old doctor, in whose family he had become almost domesticated. His quiet tastes and retiring studious habits made him avoid general society, and it was known that he had no relatives except an eccentric bachelor uncle, to whom he paid occasional visits.

Dr. Ward had formerly held a medical appointment in Jamaica. It was there that he married a West Indian lady of great beauty. Their family consisted of one child (a daughter), who, while yet in her teens, had to take upon herself the duties of household management, which failing health compelled her mother to resign. The doctor was enjoying the hour of relaxation in which he was accustomed to indulge after dinner, when he usually occupied himself in culling from his newspaper all the attractive bits of gossip he could find, for the amusement of his wife and daughter. Very cheerful looked the pretty drawing-room at such times. Mrs. Ward, in her luxurious invalid-chair, with her fine face strikingly outlined against the cushions among which she reclined, looking and listening with such a look of patient content, speaking in the dreamy softness of her large Moorish eyes. Then there was Sylvia, sometimes demurely seated in the sunny bay-window, with an ostentatious display of needlework about her, but oftener nestling at her mother's feet, in one of the unconsciously picturesque attitudes that seemed so natural to her. But, under whatever aspect, she always remained the same bright piquant creature, flitting about like a chirping household fairy, and deserving to be what she was—her father's darling and pride. Sylvia was not tall, like her mother, nor was she as brilliantly handsome as Mrs. Ward had been in her youth. In Sylvia the type had been altered and toned down, but her figure had the same graceful lines, and her magnificent dark eyes were the same in form and colour, with the added charm of spirit and animation, the result of perfect physical health. Sylvia's beauty had more of the wild English rose than the rarely-nurtured exotic; but she was undeniably fascinating, and dressed with a spice of coquetry that implied some knowledge of the subject. She chose for her dresses rich soft textures and bright colours, perhaps because she knew they suited her; for the high tints that would have been very trying to other complexions, harmonised perfectly with her clear brown skin. Dr. Ward was engaged with his newspaper, and Sylvia was seated at her mother's feet, one plump little hand supporting her glowing cheek, when the reading was interrupted by a knock at the door, followed by the appearance of the young assistant. The good-humoured doctor looked up from his paper, and said, smiling, "Warm day this, Mr. Darley. I hope you have not come to disturb me, for I am tired, and, as you see, trying to make myself comfortable."

At the sound of the knock Sylvia had sprung up from her low seat. As she stood with her face towards the door, her quick eyes were the first to remark the look of concern with which the young man answered her father.

"I am sorry to interrupt you, doctor, but there was no alternative. You are wanted immediately."

"Wanted! by whom? Has Mr. King had a re-

lapse, or is it Mrs. Price in another fright about her baby?"

"No; it is a summons from Chadburn Court."

The doctor let his newspaper fall, and instantly rose to his feet:

"A summons from Chadburn Court! what is the matter?"

"Sir Richard is dangerously ill; the servant says there's not a moment to lose."

"Strange; I only saw him two days ago, and found him stronger than he has been for some time."

"The servant says something about it being caused by a shock. He was seized very suddenly in the park—some family unpleasantness; but, of course, I could not question him."

As he spoke he glanced in the direction of Sylvia, whose large eyes had been anxiously fixed on him, her rich colour varying a little, but this had not been observed, except by the assistant, who had perhaps some reason for suspecting in this instance the existence of a deeper interest than the young lady might be supposed to feel concerning her father's patient.

"Is the servant waiting, Mr. Darley?"

"Yes; Lady Chadburn has sent the carriage, and an urgent message for you to return in it."

"I will do so; I'm very sorry for Sir Richard, poor fellow. I shall not be surprised to find that the family unpleasantness has something to do with that scapegrace son of his. You remember him, Darley?—the young fellow who sprained his wrist so badly in the last rowing-match. He's a sad scapegrace, from all accounts, quite a contrast to his brother Cyril, who, I believe, is generally liked, though, I must confess, I am not one of his admirers."

And having thus dismissed the subject, he turned to his wife, and, bending over her, kissed her forehead, saying, "My dear, you will have to dispense with my company at your tea-table." Then nodding to his daughter, added, "Syl, my pet, you must finish the reading for your mother."

"Yes, papa, I will."

He was satisfied, and bidding both "Good-bye," hastened after his assistant.

As the door closed, Mrs. Ward looked inquiringly at her daughter; something in the tone of Sylvia's voice had evidently roused her anxiety.

"What is the matter, dear; are you not well?"

"Quite well, mamma; why do you ask?"

"Because you have lost some of your colour within the last few minutes, and I noticed that your voice trembled when you answered your father."

"Why, mamma dear, you are getting quite crotchety. Papa was only teasing me the day before yesterday about my robust appearance."

This was said with a gay laugh; still it was not like Sylvia's gaiety, there was something forced about it. She had walked to the window, and was looking at the carriage that was waiting for her father. There was the well-known pair of splendid greys,

arching their proud necks and pawing the ground in their impatience, and the footman in the showy Chadburn livery holding the door open for the doctor. She was just in time to see him enter and the carriage-door shut upon him; but even when it had whirled away, she stood gazing after it, her fingers tightly interlaced within each other, so tightly that the pressure indented marks in the soft flesh.

The summons to Chadburn Court seemed to have had a strangely-disturbing influence upon her. A few hours later, when she was seated in her little bedroom, the mother would have thought there was real cause for anxiety, could she have seen her daughter's flushed face and heard the passionately murmured words: "Am I the cause—oh, am I the cause?"
(*To be continued.*)

"TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?"

BY THE REV. HENRY ALLON, ISLINGTON.

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."—John vi. 68.

THIS is clearly an outburst of deep feeling, as indeed was the question which elicited it. Our Lord's words had offended the more superficial and unspiritual of his followers. "Many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." And he keenly felt this desertion: all noble hearts do—and in proportion to their nobleness. To indulge a whim, gratify a preference, or express a resentment, men will lightly sever even so tender a connection as that between teacher and taught; which shows simply how slight the hold of them the teaching has taken. The teacher may be too magnanimous or wise to indicate his pain; but if his teaching has been to him any earnest solicitude, any prayerful responsibility, it has taken hold upon his soul, and he cannot see men fall away from it with scarcely a regret—without something like a parent's regret at the callousness of a child. The deep-hearted, earnest Christ was deeply pained; and, with an unmistakable pathos of feeling, asks the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" It was not so much the spiritual anxiety of the Redeemer as it was the wistful feeling of the man. Peter responded, out of the fulness of his heart. The Master's word was as a match to his fervent affections; they blazed up into irrepressible ardour. "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." It was not a conclusion of reason so much as an utterance of spiritual instinct, often so much more profound and true than all reason. It was eminently characteristic of Peter, whose somewhat feminine heart impelled him to great and true conclusions—conclusions such as Thomas with his hesitating doubts, such as John with his speculating philosophy, could reach only by slower and more uncertain ways; for there is no guide to truth so infallible as loving and spiritual instincts. Peter leaps to his conclusions at a bound—a faculty of believing which is both a strength and a weakness, as the history of the impetuous disciple shows. He does not ask for explanations concerning the mystery of the "bread of life," as

Thomas had done; he does not reason out his conclusions, as John would have done: he simply asks his own heart concerning its need of Christ, and he obeys its impulse. Christ could satisfy its want, and that sufficed. He saw his Lord—felt his touch—was conscious of all that he was to him—and difficulties vanished in the resistless satisfaction of his spiritual experience. His heart could not wait for the conclusions of his intellect. With an instinctive cry, he clung to his Lord—to the precious thing of his soul. To him Christ had been the life and the light; to go away from him was to return to darkness and death. "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

The inference is a legitimate and a resistless one—he who has the words of eternal life must be the true Christ to us.

This consciousness was the security of Peter and the disciples, in these circumstances of great difficulty.

1. Our Lord had alienated some of his disciples, by propounding doctrines of profound spiritual depth and difficulty. He had spoken of himself as the bread of life—as the essential nurture of men's spiritual souls. Only by partaking of him, by eating his flesh and drinking his blood, could men have spiritual life in them. He had spoken in words of strong hyperbole, not only because it was an Oriental method of teaching, but because spiritual things can be represented only by metaphors; they are incapable of exact expression, metaphor must suggest them. We cannot define or demonstrate life. So our Lord employed the analogous metaphor of the vine and the branches, declaring that except men abide in him as the branch abides in the vine, they die and are withered. He was understood well enough for offence, not well enough for belief. The more superficial and shallow of his disciples understood that he preferred a large and vital claim—that he represented himself as essential to their salvation. They were not spiritual enough to feel their practical need of this; they had not thirst enough for

the necessity of the living water to be felt, nor hunger enough for the necessity of the bread of life. The sense of spiritual need, had they realised it, would not only have removed all offence from the greatness of the claim, it would have made the claim attractive and precious. He came to fill the very yearning of their souls, that nothing else could fill.

They were offended at his great claim, then, simply because they had not a sufficient consciousness of spiritual necessity to feel that if true it was most precious truth.

Peter had this consciousness—a deep sense of spiritual necessity. He had realised enough of his own nature and want to feel that if Christ was indeed the bread of life, he was precisely fitted to satisfy his hunger and thirst after righteousness. It was a glorious word, if true. There was nothing his poor starving soul so needed as some bread of life.

There is no indication that Peter understood what Christ meant, further than this—he could not have explained, as John could, in what sense Christ was the Bread of Life. I do not suppose he knew much about Christ's atonement, or about his relations to the new spiritual life of men, as its cause and nurture. He simply felt that he wanted a bread of life. His soul hungered; and there was something in Christ, in his words, in the inspirations of his presence, that seemed to satisfy him—his thought, his heart, his hope—and whatever the mystery, the difficulty, he could not let Christ go. "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Peter's conscious spiritual need, which found satisfaction in Christ, preserved him amid great intellectual difficulties.

2. Many of Christ's disciples were forsaking him; Peter, as well as Christ, saw them go. There are few things more trying to fidelity than loss of popularity—than the influence of example. We are all of us swayed by the conclusions and actions of others. These men think the great Teacher wrong. Am I sure that he is right? They think him to have preferred a claim that is almost blasphemous. Ought I to sanction it? They feel it to be a religious duty to disown him as a teacher. Shall I be justified in upholding him? They find no profit in such teaching; it outrages their convictions, and finds no echo in their hearts. Am I not deceiving myself in fancying that it profits me? Peter did not know so much about Christ as we do, nor so much as he knew afterwards. There would have been nothing surprising in his being shaken by such an example; but he felt that Christ's words had been eternal life to him. While they had merely interested others, or scratched but the surface of their spiritual being, his deeper, truer soul had received them into its depths—they had found him in the deep places, in the

great necessities of his nature. Spiritual things were real things to him.

Let us generalise this a little. See how precious the Christ is, who satisfies our spiritual wants—how secure from temptations deep-hearted men are—how powerless to shake their intellectual difficulties, worldly seducements, evil temptations are.

Men crave eternal life. The term may stand for the entire spiritual well-being of man. It would be a poor interpretation of it which restricted it to eternal existence. This might be a curse, and not a blessing. Eternal life is eternal well-being—eternal possession and enjoyment of the noblest life.

There is no possibility of suppressing the spiritual life of man. Science may ignore it, reason may demonstrate its absurdity—prove that his physical mechanism is the whole of man's being—that man is constituted by his senses, and need own no other law; but the spiritual life will assert itself—its sense of right and wrong, its superiority to the sense, its hopes and fears, its thoughts that wander through eternity, its feelings after God, its instincts of spiritual and immortal life. It laughs at the demonstrations of science, upsets the logic of reason, by simply asserting itself. Men feel that they have souls; they cannot repress their yearnings and their experiences. The hopes and fears of the soul are as much parts of man's nature as the pleasures and pains of his body. Materialistic philosophy has not the ghost of a chance against spiritual philosophy. It never can persuade the conscious soul that it does not exist, or silence its yearnings for God. It cries out for the living God, therefore it confesses Christ. Christ tells it of God, and of the living water, and its consciousness bears witness to the truth of his words.

Next, Peter confesses a great necessity of human nature—it craves some one to go to; eternal life is not in itself. It cannot be satisfied with its own development—it is not sufficient for itself. It cannot constitute spiritual life for itself, immortality for itself. Throughout the history of humanity, men have always been seeking help and revelation; groping after God, if haply they might find him; crying out for the living God. No man ever yet has found sufficiency, satisfaction, in himself. He wants some one to teach him, some one to help him, some one to save him, some one to comfort him—a revealer, a teacher, a strong Son of God, a rest and strength. This was the instinctive craving of Peter's heart—"To whom shall we go? If we leave thee, there is no other." The thought of independence, of self-sufficiency, does not occur to him. In other things it would; in religious things it cannot. The dead soul needs a quickener; the ignorant soul needs a revealer; the mortal needs a resurrection power.



(Drawn by EDWARD WAGNER.)

"Where through the thinning elms each breath bereaves ;
Faint sunlights golden"—p. 11.

Need I specify the particulars in which Christ thus satisfies the want of the soul?

1. First, one thinks of sin, the negation of eternal life, the condition that renders it impossible. To whom, as men who have sinned, can we go for words of eternal life? Who but the Christ has ever spoken of the forgiveness of sins in a way to satisfy the fears and moral instincts of the soul? Is it not the consciousness of sin in us which makes the fitness and grace of Christ the Saviour so great? If we were faultless beings, we might be more indifferent to him—we should not so need him. Because we are sinners we so crave him, so rejoice in him. His name is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins. To whom else can we go? He only has the words of eternal life. He who himself never sinned—he who took upon him our sins—he who died for our sins—who else has such words of eternal life?

2. Then we think of our moral disorder, of our inability to resist evil, of the damage and degradation of its power; and He speaks as the great Physician. He himself has never known its disease. No one could convince him of sin. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." His very example is the first great hope for the sinful. Humanity had never before known a sinless being. He proved that sin is not a necessity of our nature. And then, how holily he taught!—every word was a holy inspiration. And what wondrous ways of holy helping he unfolded! The Comforter would convince us of sin—would dwell within us as an inspiring, sanctifying power—would make us new creatures, would renew us day by day. Whoever spake words of eternal life like these? Our hearts confess them; they exactly meet our sense of need. We need much more than teaching, we need spiritual renewal. He speaks the very thing. Can we turn away from the only Teacher who ever spake the great words that men needed?

3. Then we think of the sorrows and trials of life; and he speaks to us as the great Comforter—speaks to human sorrow as no one ever did before—to the tempted, the fallen, the afflicted, the bereaved. How wisely, how sympathetically, how tenderly he spake! How he was touched with the feeling of our infirmities! What tears he shed over human sorrow! Where among the benefactors of men is so Divine a pity as his to be found. If we turn away from him, to whom shall we go? With what a sinking heart we should relinquish his Divine comforts!

4. Then there is the great darkness and helplessness of death that must befall us all; death, that wraps up life in a mystery; death, through fear of which we are all our lifetime subject to bondage—the shadow feared of man. Who else has spoken words of resurrection life? Where else can

we go for any words of sure and certain hope? Who else has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light? Who else has the keys of hell and death?

Now just think of these four great necessities of human beings—sin, sinfulness, sorrow, and death; and test the words of Christ by the consciousness of want. Who speaks concerning these like him? Who can say anything concerning them that can give comfort at all. Turning away from him, to whom shall we go? To *rationalism*—the unaided speculations of human reason? To *scientific materialism*—the desperate negations of men who ignore half the phenomena of human life? To *philosophic scepticism*—the imaginations of men like Comte, whose brightest speculations go out in utter darkness? The world has no other system of thought at which the heart does not shudder. The words of Christ are the only words which satisfy it and make it glad.

It is this practical realisation of what Christ is, of the fitness and preciousness of his words and of his salvation, that is our talisman against all infidelity, temptation, and sin. Whatever men may say about Christ, whatever difficulties they may start, whatever disregard and dislike they may show, he is all this to our individual hearts. It is the old, convincing argument—"Whether this man be of Christ, I know not. This I know, whereas once I was blind, now I see." I have found in him light and life, salvation and joy. I have communed with his heart; I have felt the touch of his tenderness, the clasp of his love. To me he is an infinite preciousness—all that he was to Mary when she sat at his feet—all that he was to John when he reclined upon his bosom—Saviour, lover, friend. It is thus that we realise the preciousness of Christ; not through catechisms, and creeds, and histories, and philosophies about him, but through experiences of him—of his gracious forgiveness and magnanimity, as we fall at his feet in penitence—of his unfailing help, as we cry to him in our need—of his Divine converse, as we walk by the way, or sit with him at table—of his infinite tenderness, delicacy, and succour, as we weep over our dead. We know him, not because of the word of others, but because we have seen him and heard him ourselves—because we have tasted and handled of the Word of Life. "To whom, then, shall we go?" He only has the words of eternal life. Our souls have felt their touch, and been inspired by their power.

Is there any one who does not thus feel his need of Christ? What is the vague unrest—the tedium of life—the conscious lack of something that would make us holy and happy—but a dumb yearning for the living Christ? We feel the thirst; he alone can give the living water that slakes it. We feel the yearning; he alone has the eternal life

that satisfies it. In days of buoyant health and eager hope we do not realise our need; but when life shall grow more serious, and the feeling of sin and its misery shall deepen in the self-conscious soul, and the novelty of the world shall have passed, and its pleasures pall, and sorrows come, and adversity darkens, and sickness lays low, and we sit in darkened homes, and weep by open graves, and the sands of life run low, and the chill of death is felt, and the world is helpless in our need, and infidelity is dumb to our cry, and only the things of the Spirit are left to us, then we shall think of the Christ who has the words of eternal

life, and realise what might have been had we come to him; the things that make for our peace, now hidden from our eyes. This is our day. Now he speaks to us his great words of eternal life; and if we would not then be helpless and hopeless, desolate in our misery, unblessed by his great love, we must listen to him now; and when in the forsakings of the more superficial and heedless his wistful love appeals to us, "Will ye also go away?" it must be the instinctive, fervent response of our clinging hearts, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON.

THE apples ripen under yellowing leaves,
And in the farmyard by the little bay
The shadows come and go upon the sheaves;
And on the long dry inland winding way,
Wherethrough the thinning elms each breath bereaves;
Faint sunlights golden, and the spider weaves.
Grey are the low-stretched sleepy hills, and grey

The autumn solitude of the sea day,
Where from the deep mid channel, less and less
You hear along the pale-cast afternoon
A sound—uncertain as the silence swoon—
The tide's sad voice ebbing toward loneliness;
And past the sand and water's level line,
The faint, far, ceaseless murmur of the brine.

T. C. IRWIN.

AN ASTRONOMICAL ROMANCE.*

IN the year 1882, on the 6th day of December, will occur a very remarkable phenomenon, and one that will greatly excite the scientific world—viz., *the visible transit of the planet Venus across the disc of the sun.*

Few persons now living have beheld this rare phenomenon; nor is it probable that any person who may see it in 1882 will ever witness the spectacle again. The transit of the same planet across the sun's disc, which will take place on the 8th of December, 1874, will doubtless have the effect of awakening public interest at an early date to the great event of 1882. But few men of science, if indeed any, will be able to observe the former.

Venus appears to the inhabitants of the Earth as the most beautiful of all the planetary stars, being the second from the sun, and one of the two inferior planets having their orbits within that of the earth. At the period of her greatest splendour her light is so intense as to cast a shadow upon the earth's surface; and, at certain seasons, after long intervals of time, she may be seen shining with a pale silvery lustre in the full blaze of noon-day. At her maximum brilliancy her light is estimated to equal that of twenty fixed stars.

In the regions under the equator, at the time of her greatest elongation, she may be seen high

above the horizon, burning with a clear and steady flame, like a lamp—presenting an aspect far more splendid than in the latitudes of the north. She appears as an attendant upon the sun; and may be observed by those who descend into deep open pits or cavities of the earth, following in his track.

This planet is mentioned frequently in the Hebrew Scriptures, though by various names; and allusions to it abound in the mystical lore of the past, in the poetry of all ages, and in the most impassioned strains of amorous song. The ancients, not knowing that the morning and evening stars were the same, called the former Lucifer and the latter Hesperus. Milton sings of Venus as the "fairest of stars;" while another poet, in a passage still more tender, calls her the "friend to mankind."

This planet presents a very remarkable telescopic appearance. The shadows of great mountains break the circle of her glimmering light; and these mountains, according to Schroeter, a famous German astronomer, have an altitude of more than twenty miles!

During her transits, her atmosphere, like a halo of faint penumbral light, is distinctly visible. Although about the size of the earth, and performing her annual revolution in about the same period, she is so much nearer the sun than we, that this

* See also, Nos. 217 and 218.

luminary must appear twice as large to her inhabitants—if she have any—as to us; and the solar rays must descend upon her with a fervour twice as strong as that with which they reach our planet. Even seen from the earth, so luminous is the aspect of Venus at certain periods, that the body of the planet may be discerned with wonderful distinctness through its transparent atmosphere.

The great use of the observation of the transit of Venus over the sun's disc is to determine the sun's *horizontal parallax*—an element of very great importance, since by it we are enabled to calculate the distance of the earth from the sun, and, indirectly the distances of the other planets, as well as fixed stars.

The transits of Venus over the sun's centre occur alternately, at intervals of 8, 105½, and 121½ years. The last two occurred in the years 1761 and 1769; so that any one now living who beheld this latter must be at least one hundred years old, to have seen it even in infancy.

The following table exhibits, in a convenient form, the transits that have taken place, and that will take place, for a period of more than three hundred years; and also illustrates the order of the intervals at which these phenomena occur:—

1639, December 4th	} 121½ years.	1874, December 8th	} 8 years.
1761, June 5th		1882, December 6th	
1761, June 5th	} 8 years.	1882, December 6th	} 121½ years.
1769, June 3rd		2004, June 7th	
1769, June 3rd	} 105½ years.	2012, June 5th	} 8 years.
1874, December 8th			

The position of the planet is apparently very different, as seen by different observers during a transit; that is, to a person on one side of the earth, at the same instant of time, it will seem on a different part of the sun's disc, from its apparent position, viewed from the other side; and it is by a comparison between these apparent different positions—as viewed at different places during the transit—that we obtain a basis for calculating, and working out, some of the most wonderful problems of astronomical science ever mastered by the mind of man. Among these great solutions, the most important is the sun's horizontal parallax; which, as determined by the observations on the transit of 1769, is eight seconds and six tenths; or, according to Professor Encke, as the result of his observations, 8"·5776.

The transit of Venus, when viewed in the light of that knowledge it enables the human intellect to grasp, is one of the most sublime of celestial phenomena. It has been twice observed under circumstances that make the history of the event sublime of itself. Among these interesting circumstances may be related the following:—

About the year 1635, there appeared in an obscure village, some fifteen miles distant from Liverpool, a young student remarkable for elevated tastes and devotion to scientific studies. He was

much esteemed, even among the unlearned, for his amiable disposition, for the rectitude of his intentions, and for a religious life, that gave to those around him an example of more than common excellence. Ere he had reached the age of eighteen, he had mastered the most profound reasonings and calculations of astronomical knowledge. When others were idling, or sleeping, it was his delight—a delight amounting at times to rapture—to gaze upon the celestial scenery, and wander in fancy among the silver and golden worlds shining up on high.

A poet truly said that "the undevout astronomer is mad;" and we are told that Pascal was so overwhelmed at one period of his life by his conceptions of creative wisdom and power, that, in view of his own imperfections and deviations from the exact path of rectitude, he deemed it a sin to so much as look upon a beautiful landscape!

The young English enthusiast, of whom we are writing, was also subject to those grand elevations and depressions of spirit, to which common minds are unused; and, as he penetrated deeper and deeper into the great abyss of knowledge, his luminous soul seemed sublimated above all that was mean and grovelling on earth, and to dwell in an atmosphere of purity seldom attained by man. He felt that "all on earth is shadow, and all beyond is substance;" or, in the words of another poet—who, in a moment of true inspiration, has expressed in golden words the same gem of thought—he regarded "the stars but as the shining dust of his Divine abode, and the pavement of those heavenly courts where he should one day dwell with God."

The name of the young astronomer was Jeremiah Horrox.

Always happier when under the warm influences of loving companionship, he had found a friend of congenial tastes in James Crabtree, a young Manchester gentleman—also an astronomer and enthusiast in science.

The tables of Kepler, although somewhat inaccurate, indicated to these youthful *savans* the near approach of the transit of Venus. The indication greatly interested them. Should the event take place at the time foretold by the revised and corrected calculations of Kepler, it would verify the deductions of astronomical science, and furnish a means for calculating and solving some of the most stupendous problems ever presented to the human mind.

In the weary hours that other men devote to relaxation from toil, Horrox studied and ciphered; until he had himself wrought out and corrected the great tables of Kepler; and of himself, not only demonstrated the occurrence of the phenomenon, but fixed its very date.

Having become satisfied with the exactitude of

his calculations, he communicated the result confidentially to his friend.

The transit of Venus had never been seen by mortal eyes. Could it be possible that this vision, withheld, as it were, from the very dawn of time, would be first disclosed to this boy astronomer?

Days, months, and years passed, and still the earth rolled on. The memorable year at length came, and the memorable autumn, with its fading pomps and falling leaves. The memorable day itself arrived, and found the young astronomer watching—he alone watching among all the aspirants to knowledge that then peopled the earth!

It was the Sabbath; a shining day in November (old style). In a dark room sat the trembling Horrox—now just past the age of twenty—his glass poised, and a white sheet of paper, on which to receive the sun's image, spread out before him. Would the shadow of the planet ever darken that immaculate sheet, unfolded to receive, as it were, a revelation from the very finger of the Infinite?

The sun moves toward the zenith; the paper is still spotless; no pen comes writing from the far abyss of space! Suddenly a peal of music falls on the clear cool November air. Horrox hears. It is the ringing of church-bells, calling the devout to worship.

Shall he leave his post, and perhaps lose for ever the great disclosure? Shall he allow the celestial messenger to write that grand message unread?

He deliberates, and soon decides. The worship of his great Creator may not be neglected even to view the works that he has made, or the phenomena he has instituted.

With this pious thought Horrox left the room, and repaired to the sanctuary.

Here, then, amid the many deceptions of mankind, do we find one soul whose principles were fundamental. We may doubt the correctness of his reasoning at that momentous hour, but we cannot withhold our admiration from the man.

When the church service had ended, he returned to his observatory, and once more stooped over the sheet of paper. Providence seemed to have stayed the event to spare the pious youth a disappointment. As his eye fell upon the smooth white surface, he saw that the hand of the Invisible was writing! On the open sheet was a shadow; and in that shadow a new revelation of science to excite the wonder of the world.

We love to dwell on those moments of sublimity, that to the true worshippers of science repay the toils and sacrifices of a life. But in all our researches after gems from this precious mine, we have never found anything more sublime than the young astronomer's own account of the event—especially the reason he gives for suspending his observations as he did.

"I observed it," says he, "from sunrise till nine o'clock; again a little before ten; and lastly at noon, and from one to two o'clock; the rest of the day being devoted to *higher duties* which one might not neglect for such pastimes."

Horrox fell a martyr to science at the early age of twenty-two. But he did not fall, until he had linked his name to the very stars of heaven; and, we may add, that no monarch has a more enduring memorial.

Life is not always to be estimated by years. "Here he lies who was so many years, but *lived* only seven," was the inscription on the tomb of Similis of Xiphilim. The writer of the epitaph correctly estimated the life of Similis, for the great man lived *usefully* but seven years.

James Gregory died at the age of thirty-six; and Pascal and Torricelli at thirty-nine. Yet each of these men lived longer, in his generation, than most of those who go down to the grave with silvered locks and tottering limbs.

Kepler was poor; but he declared that he would rather be the author of the works he had written, than possess the whole duchy of Saxony. Horrox died young; but he must have felt that the usefulness of his brief busy life was of more value than long years of idleness.

About a century after his great discovery, there dwelt at Germantown, Pennsylvania, U.S., another youth, who aspired to be an astronomer. His parents were poor, and he himself was inured to poverty and hardship, in the days of his childhood. The age of fourteen found him a ploughboy on his father's farm. His brother relates, that when he was accustomed to go out to the fields for the purpose of calling him to his meals, he often found the fences at the heads of the furrows covered with numerical calculations! Here indeed was a ploughboy. But it is in such schools of training that men of true genius are developed.

His name was David Rittenhouse. His parents were respectable people, and worthy members of the Society of Friends; but, owing to their limited resources, they discouraged his philosophical studies. If ever a young man struggled to strike off the fetters that restrained the outgrowth of a great intellect, it was he. His character was of a solid cast, and his genius no wandering light, but a luminary burning with a tranquil and steady flame. He, too, devoted to study the hours that others pass in recreation or repose.

Again the time for the transit of Venus drew near; and the coming event, now expected and better understood, excited the attention of the lovers of science in every enlightened land. Expeditions were fitted out on a scale of unusual magnificence by the British, French, and Russian Governments; in order that the phenomenon might

be observed from the most widely-distant quarters of the globe.

Young Rittenhouse had baffled every adverse circumstance, and had by this time become famous. He had long looked forward to the day of the transit, as the most fortunate opportunity for scientific discovery that might ever fall to his lot. He had studied the subject by day, and had dreamed of it by night; and, as the great event drew nearer and nearer, a keen, inappeasable anxiety took possession of his soul. By the liberality of some *savants*, he had been furnished with instruments with which to view the phenomenon; and he was assigned by the American Philosophical Society to a station at Norriton, Pa.—as the best place for observation.

It was the 3rd of June, 1769, "the rosy time of the year;" and long before the first glimmer of day pencilled the east, Rittenhouse stood by his telescope, and, in pensive silence and trembling anxiety, awaited the breaking of the dawn.

The sunlight shoots up over the far blue hills, golden and clear. No storm-propheying wind breaks upon the tuneful air; no cloud obscures a single point of the cerulean sky.

The day continues to brighten, and more lovely

seem the shining hours. Rittenhouse gazes through the telescope with a fixed eye, but a palpitating heart. He sees the celestial messenger approaching the great centre of our system: he sees a shadow creep slowly, almost imperceptibly, upon the edge of the flaming circle; he sees the dark spot moving—slowly—slowly—across the centre of the bright luminary. The form of the young astronomer sways to and fro with emotion; his face becomes rigid as marble; his eyes grow dim; a sudden darkness sweeps across his brain; and he sinks back to the earth—nerveless, unconscious! This man of iron will and marvellous self-control was unable to bear the great disclosure—he had fainted!

Such are the moments of rapture known to the children of genius, and the benefactors of mankind.

And now, in a few more years, the beautiful Venus will send us another celestial message—writing it with visible finger on the disc of a winter sun. And many there will be to read it; but no eye that looks upon that strange rare sight will ever see it again.

O man of science, watch for the sublime spectacle, and bow yourself before it!

THE BLUE SPECTACLES.

A TALE FOR CHILDREN. IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.



MISS PRISCILLA HOLGATE couldn't be very young, for ever since most people could remember she had lived by herself with two old servants, in a red-brick house, called Holly Lodge.

Some children thought she was rather curious-looking, and perhaps she was. She was very tall, and she didn't lose any of her height by stooping either. Her face was stern, and she could indeed look so fierce when she caught any one trying to deceive her, or to do wrong, that the culprit was mostly glad to escape out of her presence. But what made her look more unprepossessing than anything else, were her spectacles. Miss Holgate's sight was bad, and so she had to wear a pair of those blue spectacles, which certainly are as ugly as they can be.

I have told you that the name of her house was Holly Lodge, and I suppose it was so called because of the great quantity of holly which grew in the garden behind. Such a beautiful garden it was! very large, and full of all sweet-smelling old-fashioned flowers, which grew and flourished there, as they did nowhere else in the whole town. There were shrubberies in it too, and odd nooks and corners where children could have played hide-and-seek so

famously; and there were one or two old fruit-trees, so big and spreading, that they looked veritable patriarchs. In the centre was a tiny fish-pond, with such clear water in it that one could very well see the pretty gold and silver fishes which lived therein; while growing all around were creeping plants, which ran right down the banks to the water's edge, just as if they wanted to have a game with their friends the fishes.

But I might keep on talking for a long while, and even then not tell you half the charms of that garden, so perhaps it will be better to let you imagine them, and go on now to tell you about the two little girls who are going to be the heroines of this story.

In the next house to Miss Holgate's lived Dr. Marsden, and it so happened that out of their nursery window his two children could see very nicely right down into her garden.

Katie and Winny Marsden were both very fond of flowers, and perhaps they were all the fonder of them because they had no garden of their own to play in. But however that might be, I know they often wished they could have a run in Miss Holgate's, and spent a good deal of time in looking at it. For the smooth green lawn, with here and there a white-faced daisy peeping out so boldly; the bonny roses, great and small, red, pink, and white, which looked up

almost from everywhere; and very often on the old wall, ripe peaches and apricots, half hiding under the green leaves—all, certainly, did look very tempting to the little girls' eager eyes; so much so indeed that I am afraid sometimes they were ready to wish it was their garden instead of Miss Holgate's.

The truth was they didn't like Miss Holgate at all; they were both foolish enough to think that because she wore ugly spectacles, and was not pretty herself, therefore she must be cross and disagreeable as well; and so, though neither of them had ever spoken to her in their lives, yet the idea was firmly rooted in their heads, that she was no friend to children, and was, indeed, some one to beware of always.

It was very wrong to think so, wasn't it? But then we must not forget that Katie's and Winny's mamma haddied when they were both very small, and so they had no one to tell them, as she would have done, which, out of all the curious fancies that were ever coming into their busy little heads, were right, and which were wrong. For, though their papa loved them dearly, yet he was always so occupied with his many patients, that it wasn't very often he could have them with him, but was obliged to leave them a great deal to the care of their old nurse Jenny, and she was a little bit too silent and stern for the children to tell her their small secrets, and so it often happened that they got many queer thoughts and ideas about different things of which no one ever knew.

One day Katie, who was a year older than her sister, and who mostly was foremost in all mischief, told Winny she meant to have a look at the gold-fish in Miss Holgate's pond.

"They are so beautiful, you can't think," she said, with some excitement, "and they glitter in the sun like anything; and they will swim away with crumbs, if you throw them some. Oh, Winny! we must go and see them."

"But we can't," said Winny; "we may not go into Miss Holgate's garden."

"I will tell you what we can do," answered Katie, with a most mysterious look upon her dimpled face. "Come and sit in the window with me, and I will tell you all."

Winny's curiosity being quite aroused, she instantly went; and then, sitting in one corner of the big bow-window, with their heads very close together, the two children hatched up a scheme of mischief, of which the only immediate consequences were that for the next two or three days Miss Holgate's garden was watched more intently than ever.

But one bright morning the children saw Miss Holgate, all dressed for a walk, go down the path and let herself out at the green door in the wall at the bottom of the garden; and finding their nurse was out of the way too, they thought now was the time to carry out the plan they had formed. It didn't take long to seize their hats and pop them on, to run

down the stairs, down the tiny courtyard behind the house, and to let themselves out into the lane which ran along at the back of the two houses. Another minute and they had reached Miss Holgate's door, and with some trouble bold Katie managed to open it; but when she would have gone on, Winny stopped her.

"Oh, Katie, I don't want to go; if Miss Holgate were to come back and catch us, what should we do?"

"Why, we should have to run away," said naughty Katie. "I shall go alone if you won't come, Winny."

Winny stood firm. I think she felt it was wrong to try to deceive Jenny, for mostly she was a good little girl, but she could not persuade Katie to give up the sight of the fishes, and so she promised to wait for her in the lane.

As fast as her feet would carry her, Katie went up the pretty garden, her eyes taking note with much delight of the beautiful flowers around her, until she had reached the pond, and then she gave her whole attention to the fishes therein. She could see them so famously, and, as the sun was shining brightly, when they swam to get the crumbs she threw them—crumbs she had put in her pocket on purpose only that morning—they certainly did glitter in a very pleasant way. Katie watching them very intently, quite forgot she was upon dangerous ground, until suddenly she heard a voice close behind her, saying,

"Why, you are Dr. Marsden's little girl, aint you?"

Katie quite jumped, she was so startled; but when she looked up she did not see Miss Holgate's dreaded countenance, but the broad good-tempered face of old Sarah, her cook.

(To be concluded.)

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

1. The Galileans had but one passage in prophecy on which to build their hopes of being sharers in the blessings of the Messiah's reign. Quote it.
2. Show from facts recorded in the Gospels that the Jews of our Lord's day expected some of the ancient prophets to reappear on the earth.
3. One circumstance connected with the conduct of Judas Iscariot at the betrayal of Jesus is omitted in St. John's Gospel. Name it.
4. His enemies applied a title to Jesus which he never applied to himself. What was it?
5. After the Transfiguration our Lord enjoined silence as to what occurred—until what time? St. Luke, without mentioning this condition of time, remarkably confirms it.
6. In the enumeration of the plagues in Ps. lxxviii. one is omitted. A striking incident is recorded in its place, which is not mentioned in Exodus.

BIBLE NOTES.

THESE Notes are intended to be not exhaustive or detailed, but merely suggestive and in outline; and as such we hope and believe they will be found useful, not only to those engaged in teaching in the Sunday-school, but also in the many family circles where some portion of Sunday is devoted to the study of God's Word.

CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE (John ii. 1-11).

THIS miracle was performed at Cana, a village in the neighbourhood of Capernaum. It is mentioned in the New Testament only in connection with this miracle, with another miracle (John iv. 46-54), and as the birthplace of Nathanael (John xxi. 2).

The "*beginning of miracles*" asserts that this was the first miracle wrought by our Lord. Legendary miracles have been imputed to him when he was a child, but the Scripture narrative here positively denies them.

"*The third day.*" Probably the third day after Christ's interview with Simon (i. 42), for in i. 43 we read: "*The day following,*" and then this miracle is introduced with, "*And the third day.*"

"*His mother saith unto the servants.*" We may conclude from this that the marriage was that of a relative or a most intimate friend of Mary's, for her thus giving directions to the servants was the act of one who was more than an ordinary guest.

"*The mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.*" What did she mean by telling him? She was certainly embarrassed by the failure of the supply of wine in a house where, as we have noted above, she evidently shared some of the domestic responsibility. Some have suggested that she tells her Son in order that they may take their departure, and so break up the party. I had rather believe that, knowing the Divine wisdom of her Son, it had already become a habit with Mary to turn to him for advice in every difficulty, great or small; and so, with a latent consciousness that he could if he would help them out of this difficulty (evident from her subsequent instruction to the servants to do anything he might order), she appeals to him.

"*Woman.*" There is nothing whatever of reproach in the use of this word, as might seem in this age, when every female is "a lady." Originally "woman" was, as it ever should be, a term of dignity and honour.

"*Mine hour is not yet come.*" Christ afterwards often spoke of his death as his "hour," but here the reference is evidently more immediate and local, and

the words would seem to imply, "My time has not arrived until every drop of wine is exhausted, so that there can be no doubt of the miracle." This verse (4) does contain a certain amount of reproof. Trench explains the words to mean, "Let me alone; what is there in common to thee and me? We stand on altogether different grounds." It is clear, however, the rebuke was more of an explanation than a direct reproof, and she evidently did not take it as a refusal, for she immediately spoke to the servants about receiving his instructions.

"*Waterpots,*"—not winepots, in which possibly there might have been some remains of the former contents, and so have cast some suspicion on the miracle.

"*The master of the feast*" was most probably some distinguished guest who presided as a kind of "chairman."

"*When men have well drunk.*" These words describe the general habit at feasts, when men, as a rule, did drink to such an excess that they were no longer capable of judging between good and bad wine. They do not refer to this particular incident, when, if any had already taken too much, we cannot for a moment imagine Christ would have exerted himself to supply them with more. It has been argued with much power that the wine miraculously supplied on this occasion was similar to the pure juice of the grape, and, as it had no time to ferment, was unintoxicating. The feasibility of this opinion is increased if we remember that "a firkin" was a little more than eight gallons and seven pints; so that each of these vessels held somewhat more than twenty gallons, which would make the entire supply reach the enormous quantity of one hundred and twenty gallons.

The chief practical lesson to be learned from the record of this miracle is this: The religion of Christ Jesus does not destroy natural feelings and prohibit innocent joys. It purifies, consecrates, exalts them. Christ is not to be a welcome guest only in the hour of sorrow, and in the chamber of sickness and death. All joys and pleasures that are harmless will be rendered far happier if we feel that the Master, were he present in person as at Cana, as he is still in spirit, would be the most honoured among all. Indeed, seasons of pleasure need the blessed influences of Christ's presence, even more than times of affliction; for we almost instinctively turn to God in our sorrow: we feel inclined nearly always in the excitement of pleasure to forget him.